

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE BILL ANALYSIS

AMENDMENT DATE: Original
POSITION: Neutral

BILL NUMBER: SB 1142
AUTHOR: P. Wiggins
RELATED BILLS: AB 1180 of 2007,
AB 929 of 2010

BILL SUMMARY: Agricultural Resources: Grants

Existing law authorizes the use of money in the California Farmland Conservancy Program Fund to purchase agricultural conservation easements by the Department of Conservation (Conservation). This bill would establish the Farm, Ranch, and Watershed Account within the Soil and Conservation Fund and authorize Conservation to purchase agricultural conservation easements through the new account.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Conservation estimates that the fiscal impact would be minor and absorbable. The Department's California Farmland Conservancy Program already employs staff to assist land trusts and others with the creation of agricultural easements.

COMMENTS

This bill would have a minor fiscal impact and concerns a policy matter on which we are neutral.

Conservation has provided more than \$62 million in grants through the California Farmland Conservancy Program Fund for more than 125 agricultural conservation easements covering over 41,000 acres. Conservation is authorized to issue grants to acquire agricultural conservation easements and fee title interests to preserve farmland, but is prohibited from restricting agricultural activities on the easements. These perpetual easements keep agricultural land in private ownership while the owners voluntarily agree to limit the use of the land to agricultural production, thereby removing pressure for residential and commercial development of the land. By authorizing the Director to approve grants that meet specific criteria from sources other than the California Farmland Conservancy Program Fund, this bill would provide greater flexibility to efforts to protect non-farmed parts of agricultural lands that offer other important resources values such as flood protection, wildlife habitat, and environmentally fragile riparian zones, while keeping the predominantly farmed portions in use.

Code/Department Agency or Revenue Type	SO	(Fiscal Impact by Fiscal Year)								Fund Code
	LA	(Dollars in Thousands)								
	CO	PROP								
	RV	98	FC	2009-2010	FC	2010-2011	FC	2011-2012		
3480/Conservation	SO	No	-----	No/Minor	Fiscal Impact	-----			0141	
3480/Conservation	SO	No	-----	No/Minor	Fiscal Impact	-----			0867	
<u>Fund Code</u>	<u>Title</u>									
0141	Soil Conservation Fund									
0867	Farmland Conservancy Program Fund, CA									

Analyst/Principal (0634) M. Almy	Date	Program Budget Manager Karen Finn	Date
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Department Deputy Director	Date
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Governor's Office:	By:	Date:	Position Approved _____
			Position Disapproved _____

BILL ANALYSIS	Form DF-43 (Rev 03/95 Buff)
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